

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FINAL REPORT
AMS AGREEMENT: 12-25-B-1241

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

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Original Submission: December 29, 2014

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Project Title

Growing Asian Specialty Crops

Project Summary

Urban Roots is a non-profit organization dedicated to changing the way people eat and learn by transforming the education process from the ground up. Urban Roots Farm host's school-based and summer programming for young students, professional development for teachers, workshops for families that engage the senses, and special public events to further promote healthy, sustainable lifestyles in the community.

During this project Urban Roots partnered with the University of Nevada and the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources (CABNR) to develop a small farm incubator program, FarmCorps, at the University's Main Station Field Lab in east Reno. The FarmCorps program was utilized to provide young entrepreneur's with the necessary skills to not only farm sustainably, but the knowledge required for starting a successful business.

Urban Roots' project was important and timely because prior to their project, CABNR had never offered training to enrolled students on specialty crop production. CABNR degrees have focused on livestock production and rangeland management with no opportunity in specialty crop production. This project not only provided opportunity for students to receive hands-on experience in growing specialty crops, but it also introduced a new form of production to students and other participants, encouraging the production of specialty crops as an alternative to the traditional livestock and alfalfa production programs.

Project Approach

Hoop house production in Nevada greatly expands the growing season and improves crop performance. The High Desert Farming Initiative demonstrates hoop house production of specialty crops, such as Asian greens, in Nevada. This specialty crop block project has proved that Asian greens are a viable crop for hoop house production. These brassicas are more cold tolerant than lettuces and provide flavor, color, and texture to mixed greens.

CABNR assisted with finding the field station location at the Valley Road Field Site in Reno, NV. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) assisted the project with all business accounts, ensuring economic profitability, and helped the project build an appropriate farming business model. The High Desert Farming Initiative (HDFI) provided the project with the site's entire infrastructure such as the hoop houses, water, and greenhouse. Urban Roots Garden Classrooms' FarmCorps program performed all of the labor during construction and crop production. Rick Lattin of Lattin Farms (Fallon, NV) also consulted the project on valuable farming practices.

The construction of four 24' x 94' hoop houses and two 24' x 124' hoop houses began at the High Desert Farming Initiative in May of 2013 and was completed at the end of October 2013. The hoop house frames were not pre-drilled, which created excess labor, cost, and time for construction. Urban Roots recommends ordering pre-drilled steel

frames in order to expedite construction and avoid these costs. In the spring of 2014, HDFI began growing in two additional, pre-existing 30' x 60' hoop houses.

Each house has six 30" wide beds containing off-site soil, compost from RT Donovan, and a drip line irrigation system (composed of three lines per bed). Several of the houses have overhead sprinkler irrigation systems to improve germination. This is recommended for all of the houses, but is not necessary for germination. Row cover is used over the beds during cold winter temperatures and in the spring to assist in germination (and potentially prevent pest infiltration). In the spring and summer 50% shade cloths were used to prevent extreme heat in the houses. Furthermore, black and green plastic mulch is buried over the beds in 4 of the hoop houses (not including the Asian greens house), which has successfully kept down weeds, raised soil temperatures, and has feasibly minimized pests.

In addition to the eight hoop houses, HDFI now has four outdoor plots, two of which contain various flowering plants that assist in pollinating cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers. The other two outdoor plots grow carrots, lettuce, zucchini, basil, and kale.

The project has also established a greenhouse transplanting system. Various greens are grown as starts in plug flats on benches in the greenhouse before transplanting into the hoop houses. Transplants of Asian greens (tatsoi, mizuna, lettuce, mustard, broccoli raab, vitaminna, Chinese leek, small gai choi, and kohlrabi) were successfully started in the greenhouse.

AmeriCorps FarmCorps was in attendance at the 2014 Small Farms Conference with a section of the Urban Roots booth dedicated to discussing with patrons the processes of the grant and promoting the successful varieties as viable specialty crops.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Goal #1: The first goal of the project was to determine if Asian greens as cool season crops and Asian produce as warm season crops were viable options for Nevada farmers to grow inside hoop houses.

Goal #1 Activities: The first set of test crops was planted in three of the hoop houses in late September. These crops include tatsoi, mizuna, spinach, mustard, leaf lettuce, semi heading lettuce, and butter head lettuce varieties. While all of the greens germinated and grew to maturity, the mizuna, mustard, leaf lettuce, semi heading lettuce, and butter head lettuce variety produced enough for harvest.

Below is a table summarizing the seeding/transplanting, harvest, and yield data collected on various Asian greens. The final number in pounds per acre (lbs. /acre) gives comprehensive information regarding how much the crops yielded in the area planted. The larger the number, the more viable the crop is.

| Species | Date seeded | Harvest yield (lbs.) | Yield (lbs./acre) |
|---------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|
|---------|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---------|-------|--------|
| Green Leaf (Lettony) | 9/23/13 | 16.37 | 3,274 |
| Butter head | 9/23/13 | 1.2 | 241 |
| Mizuna | 9/18/13 | 55.5 | 11,100 |
| Mustard | 9/26/13 | 18.6 | 3,719 |
| Lettuce (Tropicana) | 9/23/13 | 4.34 | 869 |
| Lettuce (Berams) | 9/23/13 | 7 | 1,400 |
| Lettuce (Bolsachica) | 9/23/13 | 7.6 | 1,528 |
| Red Oakleaf (Red Tide) | 9/24/13 | 3.6 | 712 |
| Red Oakleaf (Borromini) | 9/24/13 | 0.6 | 117 |
| Red Oakleaf (breen) | 9/24/13 | 2.4 | 474 |
| Lettuce (Green Oakleaf) | 9/27/13 | 5.65 | 1,130 |

Mizuna is by far the most successful cool season Asian green.

Both mizuna and mustard are cut-and-come-again crops, growing back after harvest. These crops were harvested multiple times. At least one leaf was left uncut during the first harvest of mustard while mizuna leaves were cut about 3" from the base in order to ensure re-growth of the leaves. The mustard flavor increased drastically after re-growth. Mizuna is very easy to harvest, making it an economically viable crop in terms of labor cost. As a result of this trial, it is recommend to space tatsoi at least 6" apart in order to allow the plant to properly grow. Our tatsoi yellowed significantly, possibly because of the close spacing or some nutrient deficiency.

The economic viability of mizuna, mustard, and greens was also measured during harvest. In the first week of November (2013), 976 ounces of mizuna and mustard were harvested and packaged into 122, 8-ounce bags for a total sale of \$305.

The second round of testing began in February (2014), with seeding in the greenhouse. Below is data from warm season plantings of Asian greens.

| Crop | Date planted | Date(s) harvested | Amount | Total | Yield (lbs./acre) |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Arugula | 3/24/14 n/a | 6/6/14 7/22/14 | 19 lbs. 6 oz. 8 lbs. 11.6 oz. | 28.1 lbs. | 1 bed 5,620 |
| Broccoli Raab | *3/6/14 *4/8/14 | Failed crop | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Bulls Blood | 5/28/14 | 7/22/14 | 30 lbs. 2 oz. | 30.1 lbs. | 1.5 beds 4,013 |
| Chinese leek | *2/6/14 *4/21/14 | 7/23/14 | 5 lbs. 8.3 oz. | 5.5 lbs. | ½ bed 1,100 |
| Upland Cress | 3/24/14 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Green Wave (mustard) | *3/6/14 | 6/6/14 | 6 lbs. 12.4 oz. | 6.8 lbs. | ½ bed 760 |
| Kohlrabi | *2/6/14 *3/25/14 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Mibuna | 3/24/14 | 5/28/14 | 3 lbs. 6 oz. | 3.4 lbs. | ½ bed 680 |

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|-----------|-------------------|
| Mizuna | 3/24/14 5/29/14 5/29/14 | 6/4/14, 6/6/14 7/11/14, 7/22/14 7/22/14 | 23 lbs. 2 oz. 21 lbs. 5.4 oz. 12 lbs. | 56.5 lbs. | 1.5 bed 7,133 |
| Ruby Streak | 3/24/14 | 5/28/14 | 1 lb. 15.7 oz. | 2 lbs. | ½ bed 400 |
| Small Gai Choi (mustard) | *3/6/14 *3/31/14 | 5/7/14 | 3 lbs. 5.3 oz. | 3.3 lbs. | ½ bed 660 |
| Tatsoi | 10/15/13 5/21/14 6/25/14 | 2/5/14 7/16/14, 7/22/14 7/22/14 | 13 lbs. 10.4 oz. 43 lbs. 15.7 oz. 10 lbs. 3.2 oz. | 67.8 lbs. | 1.5 beds 9,040 |
| Vitaminna | *3/4/14 *4/1/14 | 6/6/14 | 21 lbs. 11.2 oz. | 21.7 lbs. | 1/2 bed 4,340 |

* indicates transplanted crop

Tatsoi, mizuna, and arugula are the highest yielding and best performing warm season Asian greens.

Beets performed very well in the summer, as they did not bolt. Conversely, arugula, tatsoi, and mizuna tended to grow and bolt much quicker in the warm season than in the cool season, however, arugula, tatsoi, and mizuna established a good stand prior to bolting. These crops require higher turn over rate to prevent the bolting, thus transplanting would not be time efficient. Direct seeding suffices for summer plantings of tatsoi, arugula, and mizuna. Also, the germination rates of direct seeding used in this project were fantastic in the summer. Furthermore, because of the quick turn over, cut-and-come-again harvesting was not performed during these months as it was in the winter. Overall, tatsoi, arugula, and mizuna are viable summer succession planting crops.

Vitaminna was also a viable summer crop. The leaves are fairly large, yet still made a great addition to our mixed greens. The vitaminna did not bolt before harvest in early June. Thus, if additional seed was available, succession planting the crop would have been an option. Arugula performed well, germinated quickly, and produced a good stand but got too spicy as the summer progressed. However, succession planting the crop like mizuna and tatsoi seemed to work well.

Urban Roots does not recommend growing green wave, broccoli raab, or cress in the summer. Green wave is appropriate for early spring into summer, however the crop became very spicy as the days warmed. Upland cress showed similar characteristics. It was too spicy and woody to put into the mixed greens and overall did not produce a large yield. Kohlrabi did not do as well as expected, as it grew sporadically and succumbed to sunburn. The broccoli raab was planted too late and it bolted almost immediately after establishing.

Chinese leeks and mustard are very successful crops, however there is no market or demand.

Goal #2: The second goal of the project was to expose University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) students to practical specialty crop production methods while introducing students to sustainable farming career opportunities after graduation. The project met this goal by providing volunteer opportunities for UNR students and giving class tours, both of which successfully increased student awareness of high desert farming.

Goal #2 Activities: AmeriCorps FarmCorps members put together a collection of the results of the study and presented the findings to the directors of HDFI and a few volunteers, but this information was not presented directly to CABNR or UNCE students.

Beneficiaries

Through outreach efforts, both within Washoe County School District and at UNR, the project was able to reach more than the desired number of volunteers and visitors to the site. The categories of outreach are broken down into: site visitors (tours) and volunteers.

| Site Visitors (Tours) | Volunteers |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 985 | 353 |

Additionally, there are countless UNR students and customers of US Foods that were able to receive the benefit of fresh organic produce from this project. The produce was sold primarily to the Downunder Cafe at UNR and the excess was sold to US Foods for distribution.

A small amount of the produce was donated and used at Urban Root's summer camps for campers to try. Parents of the campers were made aware of the project through the monthly newsletter distributed by email.

Lessons Learned

Overall, Asian greens are a viable specialty crop for hoop house production in Nevada. Asian greens incorporate nicely into salad mixes, usually as 20-30% of the mix; they add flavor, texture, and color. There is a large demand for Asian greens, especially tatsoi, as customers showed high acceptance of this variety. Future research should include flea beetle prevention.

Hoop house construction at the Valley Road Field Station was delayed significantly because of permitting issues through the University of Nevada, Reno. This resulted in the delayed planting of test crops. Permitting issues also slowed the construction of a washhouse, which is necessary for harvesting. HDFI's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification took longer than expected, which also resulted in delayed harvests. Although the GAP audit itself was performed promptly after formally requesting the audit, the certificate took several weeks to be issued and was required by UNR dining before they would accept produce. Thus, harvests and consequent transplanting were

delayed. Lastly, extremely cold weather in December hindered crop growth and production.

Project participants recommend starting the GAP certification as early as possible in order to ensure that the certificate is received by the time harvest needs to begin. Useful GAP certification materials are posted on the HDFI website (www.highdesertfarming.org).

This spring and summer (2014), HDFI encountered severe herbicide contamination in the soil. All tomatoes from House 1 were compromised and other hoop houses have shown similar signs of herbicide damage. To amend this issue, we dug a drainage trench from high to low ground. We also irrigated heavily to leach out contaminants. Flea beetles were an issue for mizuna, arugula, and tatsoi during the warm season. Lastly, with increased outdoor growing spaces we faced the challenges of outdoor production—namely wind, heat, and pests.

Changes to and lack of record keeping prevented the translation of some data. This issue will be avoided in the future.

The greenhouse will also be the site of a micro greens operation, which will include various Asian micro greens.

Contact:

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Project Title:

UNCE Mineral County Specialty Crop Initiative

Project Summary

Consumer preference in these economic times has increased the demand for locally grown food products in Mineral County. There was significant interest in the Hawthorne area for hoop house production, food safety regulation and requirements, and local vegetable and fruit production. The acronym CSA is unfamiliar with residents and education was needed to assist growers with the production, business development and marketing strategies of creating a business based on vegetable and fruit production. A Cooperative Extension garden demonstration project promotes fruits and vegetables at Hawthorne Elementary School and provides educational workshops on vegetable production. This initiative was designed to: 1) Increase the number of local vegetable and fruit producers in Mineral County by fifty percent and provide education in food safety and organic production; 2) Provide education and assistance to local vegetable and fruit producers to sell products locally under farmers markets, road-side stands and/or CSA's; and 3) Maintain the garden demonstration project behind Hawthorne Elementary School for youth education and develop a research and education project on different irrigation technologies for vegetable production.

Project Approach

Local economics in Mineral County was based on employment from the army depot (SOC-Hawthorne), the school district, or Mineral County. There was only one grocery store in the county and fresh produce was scarce. Education workshops and one-on-one education during the three (3) years impacted the towns of Mina, Luning, Walker Lake, and Schurz (Walker River Indian Reservation). Educational articles in the local newspaper on gardening techniques provided additional outreach to local residents receiving the Mineral County Independent newspaper. There were no specialty crop producers in Mineral County when the project began, however, there were several residents growing vegetables for personal consumption. This project anticipated the creation of 5 small-scale specialty crop businesses in Mineral County by the end of the project period. In addition, this project provided education and assistance to local vegetable and fruit producers to sell products locally under farmers markets, road-side stands, and/or CSA's; or producers could participate in the Cooperative Extension Veggies for Seniors program, which provides fresh vegetables to 75 seniors countywide for 13 weeks. There was also a focus on irrigation strategies and technologies for vegetable production incorporated into this program.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The first quarter of the grant program included planning and coordination for the upcoming year. Staff discussed the most effective ways to get more specialty crop producers in Mineral County. Staff also interacted with several community members discussing what options would work the best. Educational workshops were advertised and one-on-one assistance was offered with those residents wanting to create a garden to sell local produce.

Second quarter activity began with a local advertisement in the newspaper advertising for specialty crop producers. Incentives were offered through the specialty crop grant program for reimbursement of irrigation, water and/or hoop house supplies. Incentives were only given if specialty crop producers attended a one-on-one mentoring session with Cooperative Extension staff. There were 8 producers discussing options of starting a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) business, selling at farmers markets, and growing their own food to facilitate a healthy lifestyle and reduce health care costs. In addition, the grant program assisted the Community Garden Project that is tied to the local farmers market by assisting the project with funding for an irrigation system.

The third quarter entailed staff checking on and working with producers as their garden began to grow. Staff worked to identify diseases and plant problems, secure hoop house infrastructure, design and redesign irrigation systems, and offer marketing assistance. Gardens began to grow and producers began to implement marketing systems at the local farmers market or selling to the local farmers market, selling/ trading with Cooperative Extension in the Veggies for seniors program, and selling out of their yards. Produce was growing in abundance with over 60 lbs. of produce per week out of the community garden, and local producers providing

another 60 lbs. per week to either sell at the farmers market, trade at the Veggies for Seniors program, or sell outright from their residence. Specialty items such as heirloom tomatoes, tomatillos, peppers, and others crops were being sold. The sales of producer began to slow at the first of October due to weather.

Education of Mineral County residents includes the Grow Your Own Series (forty-five (45) classes), the Herds and Harvest (eight (8) classes) program and Nevada Risk Management Education (six (6) classes). A total of 221 residents that attended the classes for growing specialty crops during the project period.

There were no producers in Mineral County at the beginning of the project. In the 2014 growing season, there were a total of four (4) producers that were still growing and selling produce to the local farmers market, and five (5) producers were trading and selling in the Veggies for seniors program providing fresh vegetables to seventy-five (75) seniors countywide. Discussions with these individuals showed that they will continue to sell in the next growing season. All producers selling vegetables are using a drip-irrigation system that was recommended through this specialty crop grant program by the producers attending an irrigation workshop or receiving one-on-one assistance by Cooperative Extension staff.

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of this program are the Mineral County consumers at the farmers market. The biggest beneficiaries are seventy-five (75) seniors (50% with disabilities) participating in the Veggies for seniors program. This program began after July 4 and ended at the end of October. The program runs a total of thirteen (13) weeks. The program supported this program by trading and buying from local producers. For example, trading occurs when producers have too much on one product and want to trade for another product in the program. Total beneficiaries would be seventy-five (75) seniors at three (3) growing seasons. This equals 225 beneficiaries over the project period.

Lessons Learned

There were eight (8) local residents that began the program with four (4) continuing throughout the project period. UNCE was able to retain 50% of the original producers recruited. The majority of the residents are over the age of fifty-five (55) and have a retirement income. The selling of the produce is additional income and current businesses struggled with cash flowing when paying the producer a salary and the increased water charges from Hawthorne utilities is taken into consideration. In addition, some of the original producers could not handle the physical work of growing vegetables. The project tried to recruit younger individuals but was unsuccessful due to the time constraint of the young population (job, children, and children's activities).

Introducing drip irrigation was successful and everyone that did attend workshops was interested. This may also be related to the increase in water charges from

Hawthorne Utilities. The local hardware store even to begin to stock irrigation supplies.

Contact Person

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Project Title

GBFC Promoting Specialty Crop Producers

Project Summary

The Great Basin Community Food Cooperative (GBCFC) has built a network of farmers who produce specialty crops. Specific to this grant, GBCFC has used the grant funding towards an online local food ordering and inventory system called Distributors of Regional and Organic Produce and Products (DROPP), educational workshops, and increased marketing specific to our specialty crop producers.

Marketing, increased sales, farmer promotion and distribution were all much needed initiatives in Nevada in order to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. The project was timely in meeting these goals to further add value to beneficiaries (producers, farmers, youth and consumers). The project connected these recipients by increasing: farmer recognition through promoting and highlighting farmers and their specialty crop products; connecting restaurants with local producers; making distribution efficiencies by serving as a storage and distributor of local produce; adding an organized inventory portal to connect distributors, customers and producers in a one stop shopping platform; educating youth and consumers on farming practices and eating more local healthier foods, all attributing to increased sales and consumer consumption of local specialty crops.

Project Approach

PACE Creative Media began work on the DROPP system in the fall of 2011. At that time, GBCFC also prepared a concise business plan including budgets and the necessary financials to see the project through to completion. PACE Creative Media began building the DROPP website for Specialty Crop Ordering with an Automatic Inventory Update System. The website can be found online at www.dropp.coop. Eight training sessions were conducted to familiarize producers/farmers on system usage. Outreach was also performed to market the system to producers and potential wholesale business partners. A Facebook page was also created for the DROPP system to further promote the system through social media and weekly posts that highlight product availability. GBCFC matched contributions to all the grant activities and over 50% of the expenses have been paid for the DROPP system in operating costs, continuing maintenance, and staffing. The GBCFC ensures the grant funding is only spent on items which solely

enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops. Tracking costs and keeping records on specialty crop producers are provided to ensure grant funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

DROPP has a variety of capabilities which includes; the capability for farmers to access crop information, fields for quantity of produce, date availability, price, and weekly downloads for restaurants. Tracking industry data helps farmers look and see what is grown and sold to help plan crops for future seasons based on what is more competitively priced as well as the market demands for various crops.

The system also has farm bios of local famers, reporting capabilities, and many other items that have already proved beneficial- and will continue to be a useful tool- for farmers/producers throughout the region. In the summer of 2012, GBCFC staff met with State Program Staff to perform a demonstration of the system and discuss other project details. A demonstration of the system was conducted by Elias Dechent, the DROPP Manager and the then Programmer, PACE Creative Media.

In January of 2013, the contract was severed with PACE Creative Media and initiated a new contract with Josh Koberstein (independent contractor). With Mr. Koberstein's additional experience and skills with programming, GBCFC has been able to slowly rebuild some of the most important & functionality-related aspects of the DROPP online system. The GBCFC has taken on this new programming expense due to the fact that all of the programming funds were spent with PACE Creative Media. GBCFC has continued to pay in-house staff members to manage and process all DROPP related activities on a weekly basis. In March 2013, DROPP was presented at the Nevada Small Farmers Conference. Overall it was a good discussion and several new contacts were made from this discussion. On June 2, 2013, a DROPP mixer was hosted at Reno's downtown local food eatery, CAMPO Restaurant. Local producers and potential wholesale customers were invited to participate in a networking and educational opportunity to learn more about the online DROPP system. Renegade Radio came out and provided free publicity for this event. As of December 2013, the DROPP online system is running better than ever, successfully supporting increased usage over last year during the local harvest season and the incredible demand during Burning Man.

In January 2012 cold storage temporary shelving was purchased under the supplies portion of the budget. These units have helped with the DROPP storage center in the GBCFC basement so additional storage is available to NV specialty crop producers. No single storage item exceeded \$5,000.

On March 10, 2012 the 3rd annual Love Your Farmer Dinner was hosted on-site at the Great Basin Community Food Co-op. There were over 40 producers in attendance; they were presented information about the DROPP system. The dinner also included discussions of farmer needs and competitiveness of specialty crops for the upcoming season. The event was a valuable networking opportunity. On February 16, 2013, the 4th Annual Love Your Farmer Dinner was hosted at the California Building at Idlewild Park. This event is an extension of a series of events that are occasionally

funded by Specialty Crop Block Grant Funds. This year GBCFC encumbered the entire cost of the event to continue to expand the local producer market and help increase competitiveness for NV specialty crops. Nearly 100 people were in attendance; many of them being producers of NV specialty crops.

Beginning in April of 2012 and continuing through November 2013, educational workshops & educational farm tours were conducted with Jana Vanderhaar (Verdant Connections), Nicole Sallaberry (GBCFC), Earstin Whitten (UNCE Master Gardener), and Farmer Todd Rissone (Avanzino Farms). Farmer Todd conducted the annual Edible Landscape and urban gardening workshop at the Holland Project location. Earstin and Vanderhaar conducted an entire season of outdoor workshops on-site at the GBCFC's edible landscape garden; necessary supplies were provided through the grant. Sallaberry and Vanderhaar led farm tour workshops to NV specialty crop producer sites including: Girl Farm (Bordertown), Agape Organics (Washoe Valley), Mewaldt & Lattin Farms (Fallon Nevada), Custom Gardens (Silver Springs, NV), Dirt Merchant Farms (Stagecoach, NV), Sunny Day Organic Farm (Stagecoach, NV), Hungry Mother Organics (Minden, NV), Jacob's Berry Farm (Minden, NV), Spanish Spring Greens (Spanish Springs, NV), and LGD Goji Berry Farm (Spanish Springs, NV). Large quantities of specialty crops were purchased for the demonstration gardens.

A majority of the workshops were for the Edible Landscape, which is comprised of 100% NV specialty crops. The landscape/community recently received an NDA producer certificate inspection. Both Farmer Todd Rissone and Jana Vanderhaar performed tours of the gardens, educated people about basic care and maintenance of these crops and taught harvesting techniques. Farmer Todd also conducted a workshop at the Holland Project. This workshop consisted of: building a planter box with irrigation lines, soil amending, planting a container garden with specialty crops, and ongoing maintenance and care.

Members of the community are open to come and participate in these weekly workshops on site at GBCFC. Another specific workshop that took place in the fall of 2013 was conducted by Earstin. He taught a course on how to plant, maintain, and harvest NV specialty garlic crops. Several other specific focus workshops have taken place including: seed saving, composting, transplanting, general garden planning, maintenance, and more.

On May 18th 2013, GBCFC hosted its annual Spring Seedling Sale where over 30 producers of NV Specialty Crops came together to sell seedlings onsite. Thanks to these specific grant funds, ads were created and ran for 2 weeks in a row in the Reno News & Review. In order to provide NDA and USDA branding, a GBCFC community members create a specific logo for the NDA Specialty Crop Grant Program. On May 19th, 2013, a Youth Gardening Workshop was hosted with the VSA Arts youth program. Farmer Todd and Jana built custom garden box beds and converted a traditional landscaped area into edible landscape with approx 20 children under the age of 18. They were able to solely purchase NV specialty crops for this event.

In the fall of 2013, in-store signage and farmer biographies for NV Specialty Crop Producers update began. This included help from Sarah Lillegard & Nikki Boyce, design, signage and curating specialists. These two helped to create templates, signage and beautiful finished products, which better displayed and marketed our NV Specialty crops and producers.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

GBCFC has been able to achieve the following:

The DROPP Inventory system was created and has been maintained since its launch in the spring of 2012. It continues to attract new customers (restaurants and community partners) and NV specialty crop producers. The software solution was a complete paradigm shift in how the GBCFC consumers, growers, farmers, and vendors properly utilize a common dataset to streamline collectively. This has ensured successful accomplishment of each their roles and tasks within this shared dataset infrastructure (e.g. updating inventory data in real-time, placing orders, and maintaining data integrity, etc.). Overall, the system has led to a substantial increase in the amount of specialty crops that were sold in the grant time period in Northern Nevada. Edible landscape workshops, farm tours, and other education workshops have been conducted and their reach was proven to be successful based on attendance, positive feedback, and continued development of the garden sites.

Temporary shelving needed for specialty crop back-stock, retail, display for local flowers, outside display for seedlings, etc. was purchased. The purchase of all necessary supplies for the education workshops & Edible Landscape classes was possible with this grant, including outdoor garden beds, planter benches, specialty crops and seeds, soil, compost, irrigation supplies, and more. A successful Love Your Farmer Dinner was hosted in 2012 and used grant funding to cover the associated materials. To date, GBCFC has hosted (in culmination) over 50 edible workshop classes, farm tours, and specialty crop production workshops.

GBCFC expanded signage and marketing for NV specialty crops and NV specialty crop producers. Original Farmer Biographies were created in 2012 and have used funds since to bring them up to date and consistent with production, sourcing and the NDA's, the USDA's and GBCFC's logos and branding. GBCFC has continued to create and update marketing and signage in order to better promote NV specialty crops and producers. External advertising and promotion costs include specialty crop ads with Edible Reno-Tahoe and The Reno News and Review for specific specialty crop related events like the annual seedling sale and the youth gardening workshops.

Other items that were achieved over the grant period include: membership growth exceeding the 10% increase anticipated, specialty crop producers grew by approximately 12%, and customer (wholesale purchasers/restaurant) participation increased by over 20%. These increases resulted in increased pay-outs to specialty crop producers over the grant period of \$428,000, a 21% increase. To date there are

99 Specialty Crop Producers and 83 customers who use the DROPP system to bring their crops to a larger market, including the GBCFC.

Beneficiaries

The list of individual beneficiaries is too long to list as GBCFC is now an outlet for nearly 100 NV specialty crop producers and has 6,000+ member-owners who benefit from the education provided around specialty crops. External youth organizations and the community at large were and are welcome to participate in any of our past and ongoing educational farm tours and workshops.

Lessons Learned

Many lessons have been learned throughout the period of grant cycle due to the many challenges faced along the way; most of them involving the DROPP online system because it is such a new a revolutionary system in terms of how local food ordering takes place. In the last reporting period GBCFC found, through DROPP system feedback from users, that they could not access what they needed or that they were unable to use the system at times due to technical issues. PACE Creative Media and Elias Dechent, the DROPP manager worked with each individual case to try and resolve these issues as quickly as possible. After several months of this continued pattern we realized that GBCFC needed to have a better system of accountability in place. In hindsight, GBCFC would have created a much more stringent contract for the contractor and GBCFC would only disperse payments based on project performance and specific goals being accomplished.

In that same vein, GBCFC realized after the fact that it would have been wise to designate some of the contractual monies as contingency funds or funding set aside to deal with unexpected issues. GBCFC also learned that it would have been better to calculate out 50% of the personnel costs for the DROPP employees for the entire period of the grant and request that up front. This would have helped with the financial strain experienced at specific times in the DROPP development.

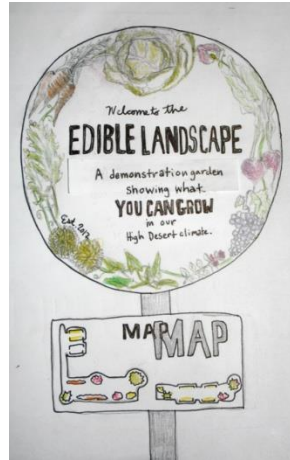
In other areas of the project GBCFC learned that it is a good idea to anticipate brand and logo changes for organizations included in marketing efforts. Fortunately, GBCFC was able to change the use of some of the grant funding half way through the project and keep all marketing projects consistent with the overall marketing scheme. Another big lesson learned was to not underestimate the power or the cost of appropriate signage and displays. One of the best ways to educate our consumers about NV local and specialty crops is to make sure that we have clear signage on everything and to keep that information up to date and relevant.

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Additional Information

GBCFC has successfully met all requirements of this NDA grant, and are very grateful for the opportunity to do so. Because it is our mission to continue building a local food system here in Northern Nevada,



GBCFC will continue to develop and add to many of the projects that were initiated because of this grant. This includes annual Love Your Farmer Networking dinners, development and recruitment for the DROPP system, Annual Seedling Sales, gardening workshops, farms tours, edible landscape classes, relevant

and informative signage and more. Below are a few photographs taken throughout the period of this grant. GBCFC has many more and are happy to share them upon request.

Photos:

Fall 2013 Farm Tour to Custom Gardens in Stagecoach, NV, Edible Landscape signage, Updated Farmer 2013 biographies, workshops and more.



Farmer Todd at the 2013 GBCFC Compost and Growing workshop

Youth VSA/GBCFC Gardening Workshop
Love Your Farmer Dinner
with Jana Vanderhaar and Farmer Todd

2013





Edible workshops with Jana Vanderhaar at the Great Basin Community Food Co-op, summer, 2012



Edible Garden Workshop with Farmer Todd Rissone at the Holland Project May 27, 2012



Project Title

Western Nevada College (WNC) Capacity Building Workshops

Project Summary

This project built upon previously funded SCBGP awards by addressing the demand for training from commercial growers on how to grow specialty crops. There is a lack of training available in Nevada for growing specialty crops in this state's high desert climate with arid conditions and little rainfall. Producers often drove hundreds of miles for training that often didn't fit Nevada's climatic conditions. With continued consumer demand for local food, producers have more interest in diversifying to high-value specialty crops that require less water. A combination of classroom lecture and farm tours that utilize hands-on learning was utilized for this project as this model has proved successful.

The WNC Specialty Crop Institute was created in 2008 with a SCBGP grant to fulfill this need for training. The results of this project demonstrate that five years later, there is still a need and demand for specialty crop training.

Project Approach

Activities Performed: Workshops produced by SCI - Northern Nevada

| Date | Workshop | Attendees |
|----------------|--|-----------|
| February 2012 | Four Season Farming & Gardening with Eliot Coleman | 150 |
| June 2012 | Lavender Production | 51 |
| July 2012 | Specialty Cut Flowers | 44 |
| October 2012 | Special Events on the Farm | 26 |
| November 2012 | Hoop House Production | 61 |
| December 2012 | Seed Starting & Saving | 39 |
| January 2013 | Seed Starting & Saving | 44 |
| July 2014 | Lavender Production | 47 |
| September 2014 | Building Healthy Soils | 48 |

Partner workshops in collaboration with SCI - Southern & Eastern Nevada

| Date | Workshop | Attendees | Produced by |
|---------------|---|-----------|--|
| November 2013 | Southern Nevada Agricultural Conference - Las Vegas | 80 | Nevada Dept. of Agriculture |
| February 2014 | Grow & Sell in Southern Nevada - Caliente | 25 | University of Nevada Cooperative Extension |
| May 2014 | Hoop House Construction - Elko | 20 | UNR High Desert Farming Initiative |

Additional Projects

- Specialty crop training was provided at the 2012 and 2013 Nevada Small Farm Conference. Attendance at each conference exceeded 200.
- SCI provided funds to UNR High Desert Farming Initiative (HDFI) for a research project on growing different varieties of cucumbers on trellises in hoop houses. Results were provided to regional specialty crop growers, and HDFI presented their findings at a hoop house workshop in July 2014

Significant Results & Accomplishments:

- The SCI has produced commercial lavender workshops for the past five years, resulting in at least three new lavender farms in production. Additionally, workshop participants are working to develop a state lavender association with assistance from the SCI. The SCI continues its efforts to develop a niche lavender industry in Nevada.
- The SCI has garnered regional recognition from producers in high desert agricultural climates interested in specialty crop training. Approximately five to ten percent of students travel 200 miles or more to workshops, including producers from neighboring states of California and Oregon.
- All grant goals were met and/or exceeded.
- The most significant result of this and previous SCBGP awards is that the SCI received funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) for \$1.5 million to cover full program costs for a period of five years, including salary for one full-time program director and two part-time administrative aides. While the SCI will continue its work with specialty crop production, the NFWF award allows the program to expand to other crops. This award would not have been possible without the SCBGP funding that was used to create and support the program in its first five years.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Expected measureable outcomes to enhance the competitiveness of NV specialty crops

- Producer workshops are expected to serve more than 400 participants and will include risk management training on production, sales, and business planning. They will help producers reduce financial and production risks and increase profits. Producer workshops served more than 600 participants, not including attendees at the Nevada Small Farm conference
- Organic farming training is expected to serve more than 150 participants. It will increase production and sales in the growing organic food industry. The organic farming training in Southern Nevada was changed to production and marketing workshops as it was determined that producers in the South needed more information in basic production, rather than organic production. Also, consumer spending is trending to purchase local as much as organic. More than 150 participants attended an organic farming workshop in Northern Nevada with Eliot Coleman, and organic practices are taught in most all SCI workshops. However, increases have been noted in local production. The increase in specialty crop production is evidenced by increased listings on the NevadaGrown website. For the years 2013-2014, the following increases were noted: farm stands (5), subscription farms (3), restaurant/wholesale sales (11).
- This proposal will provide economic and health benefits to Nevada's communities on a statewide level as it provides regional collaborations throughout the state. This outcome can be measured by the number of regional collaborations including public, private and nonprofit. The SCI collaborated with Nevada Dept. of Agriculture for a Southern Nevada conference; University of Nevada Cooperative Extension for a rural southern workshop; UNR High Desert Farming Initiative

and Great Basin College for a workshop in eastern Nevada. Additionally, SCI collaborated with Rail City Garden Center and five local farms to produce workshop and several organizations to produce the Nevada Small Farm Conference. The economic and health benefits can be measured by the increases shown on the NevadaGrown website.

Conclusions

The expansion of the SCI with the NFWF award and continued high enrollment at workshops attest to the need for specialty crop training for commercial growers for high desert agriculture. Consumer demand for local food continues to grow, and Nevada producers can fill this need. Beyond workshops and training, other avenues should be explored to help commercial producers increase specialty crop production and sales.

Recommendations

The success of the SCI program shows the need for support for commercial producers, and it is recommended that future SCBGP funding address the needs of these commercial producers. Commercial production can dramatically increase specialty crop production in the state and help to improve the state economy. The SCI welcomes collaborations with all organizations to enhance all projects and to avoid duplication of services.

Favorable or Unusual Developments

- The NFWF award midway in this project resulted in changes for the SCBGP budget as funds allocated for salary could now be used for additional projects and workshops that met the grant goals. Two additional projects were funded: construction of a hoophouse at Great Basin College in Elko and a cucumber projection/hoop house project at UNR.
- The challenge of producing three workshops in eastern and southern Nevada was overcome through collaboration with like-minded organizations that were able to provide additional resources to attract specialty crop producers to the workshops.

Project Partners

Partnerships have always been considered integral to the success of the SCI, and new and existing collaborations enhanced the success of this grant award.

- **Rail City Garden Center** - Owner Pawl Hollis collaborated to produce the Eliot Coleman workshop that provided training for both commercial growers and gardeners. More than 150 attendees participated in two days, and two of the three workshops were held at Rail City Garden Center, a retail establishment. These workshops showed the value of public/private partnerships. Eliot Coleman is a nationally acclaimed author and farmer, and Hollis was instrumental in convincing Coleman to come to Nevada.
- **Nevada Farm Bureau & Nevada Department of Agriculture** - The SCI coordinated with these two organizations to produce a farm conference in Southern Nevada. Since these organizations are statewide, they were more successful in attracting producers from southern Nevada. The SCI assisted with funding and staff support.

- **University of Nevada Cooperative Extension** - In collaboration with Holly Gatzke of the Caliente office, UNCE produced a new farmer/hoop house workshop in rural southeastern Nevada where little training is available. Gatzke's familiarity with the farmers and the region were instrumental to the workshop's success.
- **UNR High Desert Farming Initiative** - The HDFI had staff resources at Great Basin College in Elko and was able to coordinate a hoop house construction workshop at the college which is now being used as a demonstration project. SCI provided funds to build the hoop house, and HDFI provided training. The SCI had been previously unsuccessful in coordinating a workshop in the Elko area.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The activities completed to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes are listed in the project approach. All of the elements in the original grant proposal were achieved with the exception of an organic farming workshop in southern Nevada. It was determined after further research that not enough producer demand existed in the south specific to organic farming. Interest was greater for hoop house production and general specialty crop farming topics.

In lieu of an organic farming workshop, a hoop house workshop and farm conference were held. The project expected to serve 400 participants, and more than 600 participants were served, exceeding grant expectations.

The increase in specialty crop production is evidenced by increased listings on the NevadaGrown website. For the years 2013-2014, the following increases were noted: farm stands (5), subscription farms (3), and restaurant/wholesale sales (11).

NevadaGrown is a nonprofit Nevada corporation also funded by SCBGP funds, and their website has listings for specialty crop and other Nevada growers.

Beneficiaries

- Nevada producers that utilize the training for increased production and sales
- Native American and rural communities that benefit from new farming methods and increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Local economies that benefit from the retention of local sales
- Nevada consumers that reap the health benefits of increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables

Lessons Learned

Several lessons were learned from this project:

- The importance of listening to Nevada's commercial producers as to their training needs and delivering high quality training
- The importance of staying abreast of trends in agriculture and changes in consumer demand
- Collaboration and partnerships with like-minded organizations are integral to the program's success.

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Project Title

‘Meet Your Farmer’ App – Phase I Feasibility Study

Project collaboration: Nevada Department of Agriculture and Great Basin Community Food Cooperative

Project Summary

The Great Basin Community Food Coop (GBCFC) worked towards enhancing the competitiveness of specialty crops state-wide by conducting a feasibility study, which outlined the functionality of a new app that will connect consumers to their local specialty crop producers. The app was/is aimed at providing a simple and engaging platform for the people of Northern Nevada to directly connect with their specialty crop producers and their products. This new technology- using an android and I-phone app- will be a vehicle to create greater awareness, understanding, appreciation- and subsequent demand- for local producers. 56% of the population has smart phones and this percentage continues to grow. It’s predicted to increase to 70% by 2016 (more smart phones are activated everyday than babies born). Smart phones are already a seamless part of every-day lives. Our phone is the primary source of information on-the-go with the average person using 8+ apps per day.

The goals of the project were to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in Northern Nevada by increasing participation of local producers and local consumers through connecting the two and further enhancing the mutually beneficial relationship with a platform everyone uses today. The concept was to create small stickers that local producers can put on their products (using Augmented Reality). Once a smart phone is pointed at the sticker, an introduction video of the farmer will automatically play on their smart phone or tablet giving the consumer a direct connection with that farmer so they can understand where and how that product was grown, and by whom. You can literally ‘Meet Your Farmer!’

Increasing knowledge and understanding to consumers of what a specialty crop actually is in a fun and engaging way. Consumers clearly have a wide choice in grocery stores, the Meet Your Farmer app will directly highlight, promote and therefore encourage consumers in store to buy more specialty crop produce.

Raising the profile of specialty crop produce and producers to grocery store department buyers. Consumers can directly enjoy the Meet Your Farmer experience, but this project

will increase purchasing of specialty crop products through better understanding and appreciation of what Nevada's specialty crops are and who produces them.

Benefit other retail outlets besides grocery stores i.e. farmer markets, business baskets & educational institutions- and the list goes on!- basically any place or organization that sources whole food specialty crops where a sticker would still be in-tact and enable the end recipient the opportunity to 'scan' the specialty crop and Meet Your Farmer.

Raising the personal pride of specialty crop producers. We should be proud of our specialty crop producers who work hard day-in and day-out. The Meet Your Farmer project will allow specialty crop producers to tell their own story and feel proud of what they do.

Two new awards have been issued through the SCBGP, as a result of this feasibility study and the response received from Nevada farmers, in order to implement the new app and increase awareness of local specialty crop farmers.

Great Basin Community Food Co-op. The GBCFC has direct relationships with over 50+ specialty crop farmers in Northern Nevada. The GBCFC was an invaluable resource for the initial feasibility study and will form an integral part of any subsequent pilot or launch moving forward. The GBCFC also gave the project credence as it has the respect and appreciation of local farmers.

Project Approach

The Feasibility Study was a 16 week project including: Initial face-to-face meetings/discussions with 50+ specialty crop farmers about the app concept. In addition, they received buy-in and crucial input about how specialty crop producers would like the app to work, along with the development of an accurate timeline and cost of the app for a phase 2 pilot/statewide launch.

The feasibility study was not designed to benefit one specialty crop producer but to gather input from 50+ producers to benefit ALL specialty crop producers moving forward. With specialty crop producers help and input a clear roadmap could be created towards developing and implementing the Meet Your Farmer concept.

No program income was generated from this project.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

The 'Meet Your Farmer' project aimed to:

Increase customer awareness, knowledge, appreciation -and most importantly directly increase the sales- of specialty crops in Nevada.

Goal - Work with GBCFC's General Manager and Local Food and Sustainability Coordinator to identify all GBCFC 50+ specialty crop suppliers

Outcome – 54 Specialty Crop producers were contacted about the Meet Your Farmer project.

Goal - Reach-out to all specialty crop growers outlining the ‘Meet Your Farmer’ digital app concept. Hold follow-up face-to-face meetings (either on the farm or at the Co-op around farmer’s deliveries) with key specialty crop growers to discuss the project and obtain feedback and buy-in.

Outcome –Below is the list of 42 (78% of those contacted) Specialty Crop farmers that are excited about and committed to being a part of the Meet Your Farmer project:

- Custom Gardens Organic Produce Farm
- Dharma Bees
- Earth Alchemy Farm
- Earth Day
- Ecologica Farm
- Flying Fossil Farm LLC
- Geddy Fisk
- Girlfarm
- Glorious Garlic Farm
- HalleluYah Honey - LSBEES
- Hanco Farms
- Hidden Valley Honey
- Holley Family Farms
- Hungry Mother Organics, LLC
- Jamason Farms
- Lattin Farms
- LGD Farms
- Loping Coyote Farms
- Lost City Farms
- LSBEES
- MacDougall Apiary
- Mary Alice's Sprout Farms, Inc.
- Mewaldt Organics
- Nevada Ag
- Nevada Fresh Pak
- New Harvest Farm
- Pleasant Valley Farm
- Poverty Flats
- Prater Family Farms
- River School Farm
- Roy Gugin
- Salisha's Delicious
- Scott Goodpasture
- Scott Services

- Sierra Delectables
- Sierra High Goods
- Sierra Valley Farms
- Smith & Smith Farms
- Spanish Spring Greens
- Sterling Farms
- Todd Rissone
- Urban Roots

GBCFC sent all specialty crop producers a survey in order to better garner their input and record their feedback for future implementation of the app and corresponding videos.

Sample survey doc:

‘Meet Your Farmer’ – SURVEY

The Dept of Ag. and the Great Basin Community Food Co-op are working together to potentially develop an exciting new way for the public to increase awareness, understanding, appreciation -and subsequent demand- for local food suppliers. We would like your input into the project so we can help make the project as successful as possible. NOTE – Only applies to specialty crop produce.

Rationale:

56% of us have smart phones and growing. It’s predicted to increase to 70% by 2016 (more smart phones are activated everyday than babies born). Smart phones are already a seamless part of our every-day lives. Our phone is the primary source of information on-the-go with the average person using 8+ apps per day.

Concept:

The concept is to create small stickers that local producers can put on their products. (Using Augmented Reality) Once a smart phone is pointed at the sticker a intro video of the farmer will automatically play on their smart phone or tablet giving the consumer a direct connection with that farmer so they can understand where and how that product was grown, and by whom. You can literally ‘Meet Your Farmer!’

Potential impact:

By providing a direct connection between consumers and their local farmers we believe the Meet Your Farmer app can significantly increase sales of local produce. People buy from people, so by introducing the farmer to the buyer in a fun way they can relate and understand where their food is coming from and the hard working people that have provided it for them.



Name:

Farm:

1. Do you like the idea?
2. Do think the concept will work to increase awareness?
Understanding and appreciation of local farmers? Sales?
3. Would you like your farm like to be a part of the Meet Your Farmer project?
4. Do you have any additional feedback or questions regarding the project

To be involved in the Meet Your Farmer project or for any more information please contact Steve Cook at steve@greatbasinfood.coop.
Thank you.

Specialty Crop producer Meet Your Farmer survey results:

We have enclosed the full survey results along with this report. Below are edited highlights and notable responses.

Q - Do you like the idea?

Yes – 100%

No – 0%

Q - Do think the concept will work to increase awareness?

Yes – 100%

No – 0%

- Sales?

Yes – 90%

No – 10%

Q - Would you like your farm like to be a part of the Meet Your Farmer project?

Yes – 92.31%

No – 7.69%

Q - Do you have any additional feedback or questions regarding the project?

Notable responses:

- Thank you! Great idea.

- Let's get it going!

- Keep the videos shorter than 1:30. Too long will bore. Create co-op youtube channel?

- As I am new to this, having a clearing house for info would be great.

- *Do it!*
- *Come see our farm!*

Sample survey doc:



Meet Your Farmer survey

Name:

Do you own a smart phone?

Do you have apps on your phone?

Are you interested in finding out more about where your food comes from?

If you could meet your farmer, would you?

If you could do this... with your smart phone and literally 'Meet Your Farmer'

Would you use it in-store?

Any other comments about the Meet Your Farmer project and the demo you have just seen?

Co-op consumer Meet Your Farmer survey results:

We have enclosed the full survey results along with this report. Below are edited highlights and notable responses.

Q - Do you own a smart phone?

Yes – 94.12%

No – 5.88%

Q - Do you have apps on your phone?

Yes – 91.18%

No – 8.82%

- How many? (see full survey report for individual responses)

There were on average 16 apps per phone on the consumers surveyed.

Q - Are you interested in finding out more about where your food comes from?

Yes – 84.85%

No – 0%

Somewhat – 15.15%

Q - If you could meet your farmer, would you?

Yes – 81.82%

No – 6.06%

Maybe – 12.12%

Q - If you could do this...(DEMO OF THE TECHNOLOGY ON A IPHONE) with your smart phone and literally 'Meet Your Farmer' Would you use it in-store?

Yes – 81.82%

No – 12.12%

Maybe – 6.06%

Q - Any other comments about the Meet Your Farmer project and the demo you have just seen?

Notable responses (list of all individual responses on full survey report):

Amazing!

Very cool. Very clever!

It would be great to put it in all co-ops

That sounds really cool. I'd definitely do it!

I think that it is awesome and people will love it.

Every grocery store should do it!

Pretty cool. Interested in knowing. Talk to other stores.

Interesting! Very interactive!

I love it

Beneficiaries

The 42 Nevada specialty crop producers that responded to the survey and that expressed interest in the program have increased their awareness of marketing resources and opportunities available in the state for developing farmer awareness. Consumers of Nevada specialty crops will increase their awareness of Nevada growers during the next two phases of the project in 2012 and 2014 awards.

The future implementation of the app, through results received from this project, could and are anticipated to increase the sales of specialty crops in the Nevada. Although this data would be difficult to capture, it is anticipated that sales would increase through building awareness of specialty crop growers, creating relationships from consumer-to-farmer, and eventually increasing awareness of locations that sell local specialty crops (through the app and recognition of the QR code).

Lessons Learned

This project determined there is a high demand from Nevada specialty crop growers for the implementation of the Meet Your Farmer app. Growers in Nevada are not always responsive to new marketing methods and in the past have been reluctant to appearing on camera since they do not always have control regarding how their farm may be portrayed. In addition, growers are not always keen on utilizing new technology. Identifying interest level, content preferred by farmers, and cost/program options for the app were crucial in determining whether the app was feasible. The project has demonstrated that the app will provide a viable marketing method and holds the potential to increase consumption and ultimately production of specialty crops in Nevada.

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Project Title

Enhancing the Specialty Crop Industry through innovative Program Management

Project Summary

The purpose of this project was to retain program staff and sustain program management costs in order to perform program promotion, outreach, and monitoring. The following areas were the primary focus throughout the project: outreach, project performance review, specialty crop promotion, and project development. The state of Nevada has previously struggled in receiving high quality project proposals. Program staff have been vital to seeking out eligible candidates with the potential to impact specialty crop production, education, consumption, and marketing in Nevada. In addition, SCBGP management requires a substantial dedication of time to assist potential and existing grantees with fulfilling the various program requirements, which is why this project was important and timely.

Project Approach

The primary project functions have consisted of the following: conducted site-visits, performed appropriate follow-up, providing technical assistance to recipients and interested applicants, preparing timely reports, attending/presenting at stakeholder meetings and conferences, and hosting program specific workshops. These activities have been performed throughout the three year grant in order to enhance the program in Nevada and fulfill program management requirements set by USDA, AMS. Staff.

Outreach activities: Outreach events were selected that incorporated topics that would be beneficial to specialty crop industry stakeholders. This methodology not only allowed staff to reach large numbers of specialty crop beneficiaries, but also allowed them to identify issues within the industry and potential projects that would address such issues. Events that were attended included the 2012, 2013, and 2014 Nevada Small Farm Conference (SFC) and the 2013 Southern Nevada Agriculture Conference (SNAC). Five Workshops were attended that included topics on organic specialty crop production/processing, cut flowers, community supported agriculture and marketing, agritourism, lavender production, and hoop house production/construction. Print materials were created and distributed which included brochures, fact sheets, and newsletters. Print advertising was issued in rural area newspapers and the Reno-Tahoe Edible magazine.

To promote the program via web and to provide resources to existing sub-grantees, a new specialty crop web-site was created. The State of Nevada changed web-site platforms in order to remove obsolete information and create a website that is easy to navigate.

Therefore all of the information on the old web-site had to be moved over manually to the new web-site.

Goals and Outcomes Achieved

Program staff attended the 2012, 2013, and 2014 Nevada Small Farm Conference (SFC) and the 2013 Southern Nevada Agriculture Conference (SNAC) in order to increase knowledge regarding the SCBGP, highlight previously funded projects, and to identify project needs from session discussions. Approximately 150-200 individuals were present at each SFC and 80 were present at the SNAC, potentially impacting 530-680 attendees. In addition, to build upon these efforts staff attended 5 Western Nevada Growers Workshops impacting approximately 200 attendees. Workshops included cut flowers, Community Supported Agriculture and Marketing, Agritourism, Lavender production, and hoop house production/construction. These workshops were also funded by the SCBGP so program staff were able to oversee project activities while also promoting the program. The Specialty Crop Program was announced and staff answered questions and gave out program information.

The Nevada SCBGP contact list grew from approximately 200 interested individuals to 300 plus individuals over the grant period. This is attributed to program outreach at various stakeholder meetings, workshops, and conferences; newsletter and brochure distribution; and the update of the new program website

http://agri.nv.gov/Plant/SpecialtyCrop/Specialty_Crop_Block_Grant_Program/.

Beneficiaries

The awards managed under the Nevada SCBGP, including the five managed under this award, benefitted from the project as a result of the various forms of outreach, technical assistance, and promotion received. In addition, the 300 plus individuals on the SCBGP contact list benefitted by having increased knowledge as to program deadlines, eligibility requirements, helpful resources, previously funded projects, program announcements, etc. In addition, the growers that participated in the various events attended by program staff benefitted by receiving opportunities to learn about the program.

Lessons Learned

Sub-grantees and new applicants greatly benefit from staff assistance provided throughout the application and reporting process. This has been expressed via email and phone from sub-grantees and interested applicants. In addition, applicants benefited from receiving technical assistance on writing the proposal and interpreting program requirements. Assistance provided during the application phase created sub-grantees that were familiar with program goals and requirements, new the reporting requirements and required content, and submitted reimbursements that reflected their approved scopes of work. Although providing one-on-one assistance is time intensive, it is crucial in Nevada where interested individual or groups may have a great idea, but little-to-no experience working with grants.

The proposal contained a goal to reach 800 recipients through an Industry Newsletter. This was a free form of advertising which reached a large audience and targeted

individuals in the specialty crop industry. Due to department cut-backs and staff limitation, the newsletter can no longer be sustained. This goal was replaced with a newsletter prepared by the Program Assistant which is distributed to the SCBGP contact list and made available on the Nevada Specialty Crop webpage. Over the project period, two newsletters were created and sent out to the contact list consisting of approximately 300 individuals. The newsletters were also posted on the NDA SCBGP webpage, at workshops, and were sent with the Request for Proposal when individual inquiries were received.

Contact Person

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